

Standard 6-4 The student will demonstrate an understanding of changing political, social, and economic cultures in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas.

6-4.3 Summarize the features and major contributions of the Japanese civilization, including the Japanese feudal system, the Shinto traditions, and contributions in literature and the arts. (H, E)

Taxonomy Level: B 2 Understand/Conceptual Knowledge

Previous/future knowledge:

This is the first time students have been taught about the history of Japan.

Previously in 6th grade, students have explained feudalism including feudal relationships, the daily lives of peasants and serfs (6-3.1).

In 7th grade, students will continue their study of Japan as they summarize aspects of the rise of totalitarian governments in Germany, Italy, Japan, and the Soviet Union (7-5.4). Students will also explain the causes, key events, and outcomes of World War II, including the German, Italian, and Japanese drives for empire (7-5.5).

In Global Studies, students will summarize the functions of feudalism and manorialism in medieval Europe, including the creation of nation-states as feudal institutions helped monarchies centralize power (GS-2.5). Students will explain the economic and cultural impact of European involvement on other continents during the era of European expansion (GS-4.2). Students will compare the political actions of European, Asian, and African nations in the era of imperial expansion, including the reasons for and the effects of Japan's transformation and expansion, and the resistance to imperialism (GS-4.5). Students will explain the causes, key events, and outcomes of World War II, including the German, Italian, and Japanese drives for empire (GS-5.4). Students will compare the ideologies and global effects of militarism in Japan prior to World War II (GS-5.5).

In US History, students will analyze the United States' decision to enter World War II, including the rise and aggression of totalitarian regimes in Japan under Hideki Tojo and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor (USHC-8.1). Students will summarize and illustrate on a time line the major events and leaders of World War II, including the major battles of Midway, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa; and the dropping of the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (USHC-8.3). Students will also summarize the impact of World War II and war mobilization on the home front, including war bond drives, rationing, the role of women and minorities in the workforce, and racial and ethnic tensions such as those caused by the internment of Japanese Americans (USHC-8.3).

It is essential for students to know that much of Japan's history has been dictated by its physical isolation as a nation of islands and also by its cultural links to China. The Japanese developed their unique culture, but studied the Chinese culture as an example. The Japanese writing system and language are clearly similar to the Chinese and demonstrate this linkage between the two cultures. Much like the Chinese, the Japanese also had a choice between remaining isolated from the rest of the world or not. Early experiences with Europeans

convinced the Japanese that isolationism was a wise policy. Because of its small size and limited amount of arable land, the Japanese have traditionally relied on rice and the sea for their food. Therefore, students must understand the historical value of land and resources, both physical and human, to the Japanese. The high value placed on the land resulted in numerous conflicts over its control.

As the rule of the Japanese shoguns diminished, Japan was divided into a number of smaller territories ruled by military lords known as daimyo. The daimyo were loyal to the emperor and the shogun, but they ruled their lands as independent kingdoms. This created a feudal system in which vassals (former samurai warriors) were hired to protect the lords' (daimyo's) kingdoms.

In spite of the many wars and struggles for control of the land, Japan's economy continued to grow. The Japanese people produced beautiful examples of art, architecture and literature. The arts were heavily influenced by the religious practices of Buddhism and Shinto. Feeling that each religion focused on different needs in their lives, many Japanese followed the teaching of both religions. Shinto shrines were built near sacred natural features that were considered beautiful by the Japanese. Buddhist ideas inspired many Japanese temples, paintings, poems and plays. The martial arts are also a result of practicing Zen Buddhism and were frequently used as a training technique of the samurai warriors as they learned to control their bodies and movements. Other cultural features from Japan during the Medieval period included calligraphy, origami, tanka poetry, plays and novels that described warriors in battle, lacquered boxes and furniture, landscape paintings that used water colors or ink and tea-drinking ceremonies.

Japan traded the items listed above as well as pottery, paper, textiles, swords, books and porcelain. Its trade throughout Asia spread, Japanese influence throughout the world and also allowed many Japanese nobles, merchants and artisans to become very wealthy.

It is not essential for students to know the names of the earliest civilizations in Japan, nor the names of specific emperors or shoguns. It is also not necessary to know the different variations of Buddhism that are practiced in Japan.

Assessment guidelines: In order to measure understanding of the features and major contributions of the Japanese civilization, appropriate assessments will require the student to **exemplify** Buddhist and Shinto influences on Japanese art forms, **classify** members of the society in terms of their position in the feudal structure, **compare** the Japanese feudal system with that of Europe, and **explain** the influence of geographic factors on Japan's religious beliefs and artistic expression.